

SPECIFIC FEATURES OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN SOVIET RUSSIA IN 1918 TO 1922 (IN TERMS OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT IN KAZAN)

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ABSTRACT

The article is dedicated to a complex and multi-faceted process of music education reforms in the early years of the Soviet power in Russia. Though decrees on nationalization of the cultural property and centralization of spiritual life in the country were passed in 1917, creation of a new system of education and control was started in 1918 with establishment of the People's Commissariat for Education. There had been no such authorities in Kazan government until 1919, and for the first two years, the system was highly independent. The article uses methods of the individual history including a biographical method, which allows creating a collective biography of the holistic institution in the social and cultural environment. The article describes a history of creation of the Oriental Conservatory in Kazan from the first projects represented in the late 1918 to attempts of its implementation. The Oriental Conservatory combined features of public educational institutions and a practice-oriented research university. It was a project of integration of the traditional culture of people in the Volga region and the Urals and its development in line with the academic system. Entry quotas were provided for native peoples of the Volga region as well as a dropout system for underachieving students. As an autonomous place of higher education with a wide range of functions, the Oriental Conservatory would not fit plans of the People's Commissariat for Education and it was dissolved in the early 1922. The experience of the Oriental Conservatory in Kazan demonstrated that even in the situation of the revolution, civil war and authoritarian, severely ideology-driven power having being formed scientific and creative projects could be implemented in their authors' enthusiasm. Tough economic times were rather a pretext than a reason to dissolve it by Soviet authorities. The conservatory – but in the other format – was opened again in Kazan in 1945.

Keywords: *Education, individual history, social and cultural environment, Kazan, R.Gummert, V.Ayonov, N.Nikolskiy, the Oriental Conservatory.*

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1920s, a system of education in Russia in principal cities and beyond them survived a period of intense experiments which were based on two opposite pushes. First, a push from Moscow supposed ideologization of the professional education, and consolidation and fusion of the existing structures. Second, an opposite push also had effect on the form and content of the reforms as it assumed massive involvement and nationwide availability of education including a music one. The general grounds of the new policy were announced as far back as in November of 1917 when the State Commission on Education was established which would develop the grounds of the new system of people's education. The People's Commissar of Education, A.V. Lunacharsky stated basic principles and tasks of the Soviet Government's policy: general compulsory primary education, common availability of the any-level

school, democratization of the people's education and account taken of local and national special features. On December 1, 1917, the People's Commissariat for Education published in the Pravda newspaper an address to the intelligentsia with appeal to "work at rapprochement of the mass to the art" (Spiridonova, 1993: 50). Until 1919, Kazan Government had no a governing Soviet authority which directly ran the music education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Music education processes have been studied on the basis of methods of E.Mounier's personalistic philosophy when the personality is considered as the primary regarding any social systems, and material and economic need (Mounier, 1948). The individual history is one of prospective currents of a historic research. It examines the creative personality in interaction with other personalities, with its social environment and with surrounding cultural and intellectual traditions. Within the frame of a comprehensive approach, personalism is convenient as that combining source-studying, chronological and musicological method of the research. The article describes a single music-educational space, which has no sense without the use of a biographical method. The historic biography concerns not with the personality itself but its status and place in a social and cultural environment of the respective times, thus it is possible to write a collective biography – of the entire institution (Repina, 2001: 304-305).

The history of music education in Kazan and Tartary has been studied in its entirety and the most important sources have been introduced into scientific discourse. Regarding the analytical development, a study of social and cultural points of a scientific and music environment in Kazan has been started (Safiullina, 2014). Historic roots to form a tolerant environment in education establishments based on multi-cultural and multi-lingual environment (Valiahmetova et al, 2014), as well as integration processes in the education environment are extremely important for the needs of modern times (Shaidullina et al, 2015). These parallels shall be studied as many today's processes have similar ones in the century-old times.

RESULTS

At the time of the revolution, a music school at Kazan branch of the Russian Musical Society (RMS) was a single special music educational establishment in Kazan. Rudolph Gummert (1862–1922) was the founder and eternal director. In October of 1917, the staff of the school and Musical Society expressed a wish to "work in the vineyards of music education" which was repeated by the director in his appeal to the new power (Salitova 2008: 50-51). As a result of reforms of Kazan music school, the new director – Ruvim Polyakov – started establishment of the National two-stage music school in 1919 by the order of the People's Commissar of Education (the "Znamya Revolutsii" newspaper. – 1919. – No. 191; 24th August). The school was opened in September. A famous musical critic and musicologist, professor N.D.Kashkin (1839–1920) who had moved for Kazan from Moscow in 1918 played a large part in creation of the new educational institution.

At the same time, the new power had got down to the problems of national culture development of people in the Volga region. An academic board of the Central Muslim Commissariat of the People's Commissariat for Nationalities, a people education department of the Muslim commissariat of Kazan Council and a Muslim social committee operated (Vayda-Saydasheva, 1991: 13). The documents of that time used actively the notion "education of the Oriental working people in Russia" in any area including a musical one. That contributed to a substantial growth of scientific interest in the musical folklore of people in the Volga region.

On June, 25, in 1920, the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was founded where its own People's Commissariat for Education existed. Its artistic department set among others a task to "develop

the Oriental music". The policy of the Tatar People's Commissariat for Education was focused on "education of Tatar working people and first of all the nations inhabiting this region since olden times". By September 1920, a scientific department had been created in the People's Commissariat for Education. As far back as in March 1920, an ethnographic concert where local music was performed was given in Kazan University (Safiullina, 2014).

In 1918, two projects of the conservatory were represented at once: by Rudolf Gummert on November, 1, and by valentine Ayonov on November, 28, in the same year (Faizrakhmanova, 2010). That event coincided with the decision of the People's Commissariat for Education on music education of the Oriental nations (the "Znamya Revolutsii" newspaper. – 1919. – No. 245, October 29).

Valentin Ayonov, a former opera singer, as far back as in 1917, applied for the Muslim Commissariat of Kazan on the opening of music classes for the people in the Volga region. As a result, since January 1, 1918, the "Studio of Liberal Arts" where 114 Tatars, 48 Chuvashes, 31 Mari and 6 Udmurts people had been learning as early as in first six months started to operate (Vayda-Saydasheva, 1991: 80). Ayonov stated the main principles of the conservatory foundation in his memorandum to the People's Commissariat for Education of Kazan Government of that time. As a result, Ayonov took charge of the Central Oriental Music School in 1918.

R. Gummert had represented a similar project a bit earlier. He underlined that "music education shall not be a luxury or privilege; it shall first of all get access to people and develop there" (the National Archives of the Republic of Tatarstan, Stock R-271, Inventory 1, File 76, sheet 1). R.A.Gummert supposed to open the conservatory on the base of the RMS Music School – his own school having nationalized. He also planned to join the Muslim music school. He saw the main purpose of the Oriental Conservatory in involvement of people of the East in the music life via systematic study of their national culture, education of the youth on the base of the folk music, as well as in the collecting and handling of the folklore, and keeping of original traditions of the people in the Volga region.

The work at studying the music culture and folklore started in the Oriental Music School. The program of the work in that current was stated as far back as in 1906 by Moscow musical and ethnographic commission. In 1920, the Oriental music school was reformed in the Central Oriental Music High School.

In July 1921, the Oriental Conservatory was opened on the base of that private school; V.Ayonov remained as the director of the Conservatory. He also headed the commission for choosing students from the national regions; a boarding school was opened for those students. The Oriental Conservatory belonged to establishment of the People's Commissariat for Education of Tatar Republic and exercised rights of an academic autonomy; the Arts Council was its top administrative body and appointed professors and teachers. A systematic study and wide promotion of music activity of the nations of the Russian East was among the most important tasks of the Oriental Conservatory. A music and ethnographic faculty was one of five faculties of the Conservatory. Its curriculum included disciplines in history and psychology of the nations in the Volga region, the Urals and Siberia; handling methods for the folk music, history of national music instruments and poetic works of Finno-Ugric and Turco-Tatar tribes were also learned. The students studying ethnography learned record live folk songs with a phonograph and compose music pieces in a folk style. Tatar, Mari and Chuvash choruses operated.

The music and ethnographic association operated under the Conservatory. It was engaged in an organizational and research activity, collected music and poetic folklore of the Tatars, Chuvashes, Bashkirs, Mari, Udmurts, Mordovians, and Perm people, etc. The association contacted scientists of the Mari and Chuvash Republics, Bashkiria, Kirghizia, Kalmykia and the Eastern Siberia. Famous turkologists S.Malov and N.Katanov were members of the association (Safiullina, 2014). As early as since March 1921, the Association kept holding monthly meetings under the Arts Council. Topics of the

meetings were of great versatility, 11 reports were only heard within 1921. The Conservatory published a paper of the Chuvash ethnographer, N.Nikolskiy, "The Outline of Folk Music History of the Nations in the Volga Region". Nikolskiy was invited to the Oriental Music School as far back as in 1919, and since 1921, he carried duties of the director of the Conservatory and the Chairman of its Arts Council due to V.Ayonov's illness and death.

In February 1922, the People's Commissariat for Education of Tartaria decided to merge the Oriental Conservatory and the National Two-Stage Music School into a single institution with downgrading. A number of its students was supposed to restrict to 600 people with a quota of 200 places for the Muslims. Professor N.Nikolsky offered not to downgrade the institution and to grant to the school the status of the Oblast one, make it a center of training of experts in music education and keep studying and developing music creation of the nations in the Volga region systematically. However the Council of People's Commissars of the Tatar Republic dissolved the Oriental Conservatory by its regulation on March 11, 1922; the Oriental Musical Vocational School was founded instead. The regulation ran that the main reason was lack of budget means; the ethnographic department was supposed to give to the People's Commissariat for Education. The Conservatory – but as an academic higher educational institution – was only opened again in Kazan in 1945.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The main reasons to stop the experiment with the Oriental Conservatory are as follows:

1. The policy of the Soviet power initially supposed a tight control of education; it was a convenient solution to cut back a network of musical institutions and downgrade them.
2. A critical financial and economic situation in the country: the highpoint of the famine in the Volga region was just in 1921 to 1922, as a result the Soviet state had to use the foreign aid.
3. Due to historic circumstances, two special music educational institutions co-existed – the National Two-Stage Music School and the Oriental Conservatory which resulted in a way in overlapping while a skill level of newly entered students was extremely low.
4. Lack of experienced teachers: within 1921 to 1922, the Oriental Conservatory lost its best teachers including R.Gummert, N.Katanov, V.Ayonov. All of them died because of illnesses in rigorous postwar conditions. Most famous musicians and scientists, such as A.Samoylov and S.Malov, preferred to leave Kazan in those years.

SUMMARY

Nevertheless, the experience of the Oriental Conservatory demonstrated that even in the situation of the revolution, civil war and authoritarian, severely ideology-driven power having being formed creative personalities' activity was possible and they were able to implement specific projects in the area of education. By efforts of R.Gummert, V.Ayonov and N.Nikolskiy, the foundations for professional music high education in the Volga region were laid down. The Oriental Conservatory was the only music high educational institution of the Volga-Ural region in the early 1920s. It had an academic autonomy and performed musical and ethnographic researches beside the educational functions.

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